



News Release

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ECBC Chemical-Biological Defense Breakthrough Named "Greatest Invention"

*Invention allows high-volume analysis of potential
biologically-contaminated samples*

Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. - During the anthrax scare of Fall 2001, medical facilities and research laboratories were overwhelmed with the large number of suspect pathogenic environmental samples to be analyzed. A system to handle hundreds of samples at a time, while protecting workers, was desperately needed.

Inventors at Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC) tackled this national problem, developing the Automated Biological Agent Testing System. ABATS was named one of the U.S. Army Materiel Command's "Top Ten Greatest Inventions" for 2002 and, with its inventors, will be formally honored in a Nov. 12, 2003, ceremony at Fort Belvoir, Va.

ECBC had been designing a robotic high-capacity sampling unit, but the ABATS program was accelerated in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, with the goal to triple the output of the traditional manual lab, reduce the labor threefold, and reduce the cost of analysis per sample by at least half. The inventors achieved those goals.

"The team is honored to receive this award," said Dr. Peter Emanuel, one of the inventors of the ABATS. "The ABATS helped solve several critical problems for our national defense and I'm pleased it is being recognized. But we can't rest on our laurels. We need to keep working on these critical national security

issues."

The Edgewood robotics team has completed the second generation of ABATS - a small transportable unit that can be deployed to the site of a potential biological event. This system, called Stations of Robotic Monitoring (STORM), has been replicated and deployed to several sites.

For more information or to speak with one of the inventors, contact ECBC Public Affairs at 410-436-3610.